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Executive Registry
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DD/S 69-1037

6 MAR 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence
Deputy Director for Plans
Deputy Director for Support
Deputy Director for Science and Technology

SUBJECT : Language Development Program

DDP & DDI

1. It is obvious from the chart attached that the language requirements set by the principal language using Directorates in August '66 will not be met by the deadline of 1 January 1971. The success of the Language Development Program (LDP) depends on the establishment of realistic position requirements, an accurate count of the tested capability in each language and a plan for training that diminishes the difference between position requirements and tested capability. Without a systematic appraisal of these factors, on at least an annual basis, it is impossible to know if sufficient progress is being made in this vital area of Agency operations. Within the framework of present regulations and the functioning of the Language Development Committee (LDC), there is structured a system of reports, which if conscientiously submitted, are sufficient to provide each Deputy Director with a knowledge of the status of language development in the Directorate. Important to the success of this mechanism is the continued assignment to the LDC of representatives who can speak for you and monitor the annual submission of position and training requirements. These two submissions, along with the roster of tested capabilities, provided jointly by the Offices of Training and Personnel are the very backbone of the LDP.

2. The chart shows ten key languages. The first column represents language positions for which a prescribed level of skill is essential. The level of skill is matched against known staff capabilities (column 2) leading to the computation of language proficiencies (column 3) that must be met by 1971 when the Agency's new Foreign Language Program is to be fully implemented. A factor of three was used to compute the originally submitted requirements since it is the Language Development Committee's view that to keep one position filled with a language-qualified officer there must be three candidates. Oral proficiencies are the bases for the Clandestine Service and Support Services determinations; reading skills, for the Intelligence Directorate.

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Statistically interpreted, the sampling shows the Agency with no significant surplus of language skills except at the Elementary level of French. At the same time it is in French that we are doing the most training. Shortages exist throughout at the tested Intermediate and High levels. There is a deficiency in usable Russian, a fact made more serious by the association of this capability with older employees of OSS and post war background -- whose retirement from the Agency becomes imminent. Requirements for Thai, Indonesian and Arabic appear unrealistically low.

3. Essential to the system is a reliable statistical base. I am not certain that these figures of language proficiencies are accurate; but we must use this base, or a corrected one, for planning. Analysis of the number of requirements for High fluency causes me to wonder if this category of requirements represents a realistic appraisal of the proficiency needed to do the job. The speaking goal of Agency training should be Intermediate proficiency; this "professional" level is sufficient for most of our purposes. (See attached description of language levels) High is a level very close to Native and is a proficiency which the Agency needs but in numbers related realistically to requirements. I raise this question because a serious reassessment of position requirements should be made at this time and I am aware that these have been called for and will be forthcoming from the Directorates by 1 May 1969, and hereafter be submitted on 15 January.

4. No language training program can succeed without full cooperation of the Directorates. To this end, the Directorates should assign more people to full-time training and should avoid pulling people out before they have achieved the goals set for them. Only long-range planning can assure steady enrollment and uninterrupted stay in training to achieve the goals set for 1971. In addition, the use of the favorable overseas environment for language training must be maximized, while we increase our efforts to recruit employees with at least an Elementary proficiency in a language. When we consider that it takes about two years of full-time language study in the "hard" languages to achieve Intermediate level, the significance of hiring new employees with language competence and of using the overseas environment for its furtherance or acquisition assumes important dimensions.

5. I am informed that the Language School can test the approximate 2,500 untested claimed proficiencies within a six-month period. However, in order to assure that the important bulk of these claims, those above Slight be processed, those claiming only Slight may be delayed until after 15 September 1969 by which time each Directorate will report to my office on the status of its untested proficiency claims.

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6. With the intent of more closely coordinating the Language Program, the Directorates will submit to this office on 15 January an annual report which is to be a summary of position requirements as opposed to tested capability. In addition the report should include a graphic illustration of the training accomplishments of the year as opposed to the training requirements submitted. The format for this report may follow that of the attached or be agreed upon with the LDC. The Chairman of the LDC will combine the pertinent data from the Directorates' Summaries with other required reporting by 1 February into an annual report for the Director.

REPORT

7. I am aware of various special efforts made to improve our language capability and while they are certainly laudatory, the figures of the chart tell me we must do more.

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L. K. White
Executive Director-Comptroller

Atts

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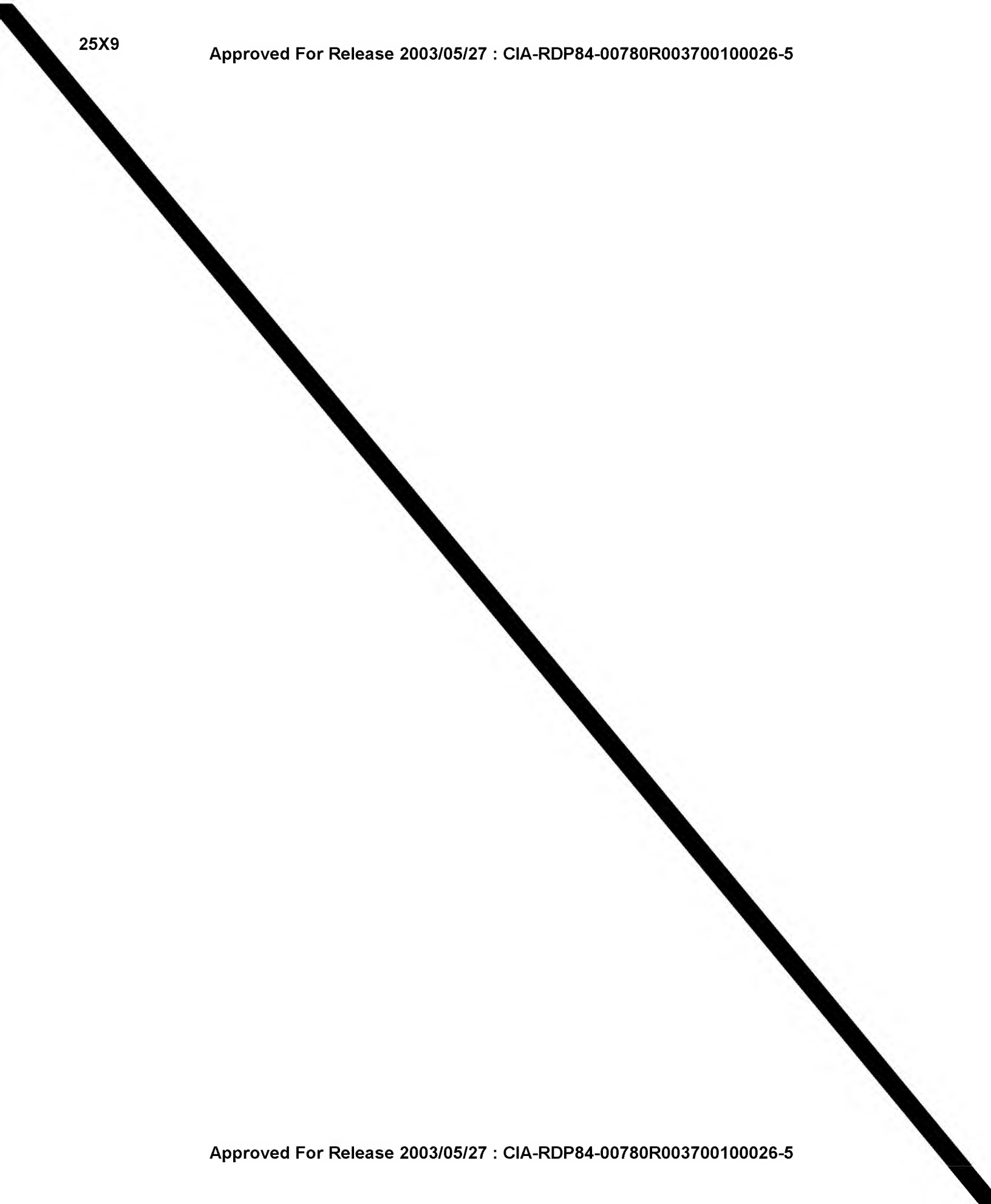

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28 March 1968

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Pronunciation - Speaking - Understanding

The five levels of foreign language proficiency described below have been established as a standard for discussing and describing the linguistic competence of all Agency personnel who have a speaking proficiency in a language other than English. To facilitate communication, they have been written to be as clearly distinct from one another as possible. Since it would be impractical, if not impossible, to include within the descriptions the various operational applications of these definitions, they have been written in general rather than in operational terms. The consumer must ultimately decide which of the levels described is necessary for a given operational task.

ZERO - Isolated words and phrases, of no practical use.

SLIGHT - Courtesy Level

1. The candidate has had a very limited experience with the language, he knows enough at this level to make his needs understood in a variety of situations that might occur in the course of routine travel. His vocabulary will be limited, his pronunciation will at times be unintelligible to native speakers not used to dealing with foreigners, and -- except for set memorized expressions -- his speech will be hesitant and disjointed. His comprehension of the language probably does not go beyond understanding simple questions and statements, spoken at less than normal speed. However, assuming these limitations, in order to qualify for this rating he must be able to ask and understand directions, order a meal, get a hotel room, get a train ticket, count, make a purchase, tell time, and handle basic courtesy requirements (greetings, introductions, etc.).

A candidate with this rating has the minimum proficiency necessary for survival on a day-to-day basis in the target country. He is not equipped, however, to carry on more than halting conversation with native speakers of the language.

ELEMENTARY - Minimum Working Level

2. At this level the candidate should have enough control of the language to be able to carry on genuine, though not sustained, conversation. He will make obvious mistakes in grammar, and will speak at generally less than normal conversational speed -- but with pronunciation that only occasionally interferes with communication. His limitations

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in vocabulary will frequently reduce him to verbal groping, even to momentary silence. But, given these limitations, he should be able to comprehend the language (with occasional misinterpretations) when it is spoken at normal speed on non-technical topics, he should be able to string two or three sentences together to give more than terse answers to questions, and should have sufficient vocabulary to talk about himself (autobiographical data, daily routine, home life, etc.), to describe a street scene, a picture or an event, and to carry on an uncomplicated conversation about some concrete topic (the weather, what he likes or dislikes about his living quarters, etc.). He should be able to handle such situations as making inquiries of a landlord about a prospective apartment, explaining simple office routine to a new employee, or arranging by telephone to meet someone at a given place.

INTERMEDIATE - Professional Level

3. At this level the candidate should be able to speak the language at normal, or near normal, conversational speed -- with occasional hesitations for lack of vocabulary -- and have enough facility with it to be able to sustain conversation with reasonable ease on a variety of topics. His pronunciation, although obviously foreign, should be such that it never interferes with communication. The candidate will make a limited number of not very serious grammatical mistakes. At this level, assuming the limitations mentioned, he must be able to use the language as a practical tool, without a great deal of translation from English. He should be able to understand almost all of what is said to him in everyday social conversations, as well as to follow speeches, clear radio broadcasts, and most conversation between native speakers.

He should be able not only to describe things in factual terms, but also to tell a short narrative, express his opinions, or chat about things in which he has a particular interest (his hobby or professional specialty, sports, etc.). He should be proficient enough to offer comments on political and social problems, well-known personalities, or the events currently making headlines in the news.

HIGH - Maximum Non-Native Level

4. At this level the candidate should be able to converse with speed and confidence on any non-technical topic that he might normally discuss in English. This individual would not usually be mistaken for a native, but his proficiency with the language should be such that natives would not feel required to make linguistic concessions to him. He should almost never make a grammatical error in speaking -- though occasionally in choice of vocabulary -- and his pronunciation should so closely approximate native speech that it is not readily identifiable as foreign. He should be able to understand anything that he hears in the language -- with the exception of dialect variations and colloquialisms outside the range of his experience.

He should have a large vocabulary -- including a wide range of idiomatic expressions, some drawn from the literature of the country -- and enough competence with the language to use it even in rather trying situations, e.g., defending U.S. policy and cultural attitudes from verbal attack by an anti-American student or politician.

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NATIVE - Bilingual Proficiency

5. The candidate must be able to use the language in a manner equivalent to that of a well-informed native speaker. He will speak fluently and accurately in all practical and social situations, and freely and idiomatically in all special fields with which he is familiar. His speech on all levels will be fully accepted by well-informed native speakers in all of its features, including breadth of vocabulary and expression, colloquialisms, and pertinent cultural references. He will be able to comprehend all non-technical conversations, and technical discourse in his field.

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DTR-2782

69-0556

Executive Registry
69-901

4 FEB 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT : Language Development Program

1. This memorandum is for your information only.

2. This is a report of conclusions and developments during Calendar Year 1968.

a. Conclusions:

At the present rate of progress language position requirements established by the Directorates will not be met by 1 January 1971; in fact, we will fall far short of our overall language program goals.

Unless the Directorates take a firmer position on testing each individual who claims a language competence, it will be impossible even to know the Agency's true language position. There are still 25X9 [redacted] claimed proficiencies to be tested.

Training and position requirements must be closely reviewed and regularly submitted by Directorates on an annual basis if there is to be an orderly progress toward Agency language goals. Since the requirements submission in August 1966, only the DDS has resubmitted. The Directorates have been asked to submit 1969 requirements by May.

Given the cost and time it takes to learn a foreign language, the need to seek language qualifications or aptitudes through recruitment becomes more urgent.

The funds and personnel available for language training cannot be cut if we are to maintain the needed momentum of the Language Development Program.

b. Developments:

Attached is a chart, a sampling from the Clandestine

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Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

Services and the Intelligence Directorate, which represents a prognosis of language requirements in 1971. As the DDS lists only [redacted] requirements in 20 languages and mainly at the Slight and Elementary levels, and the DDS&T none, these two Directorates are not included. The chart shows ten key languages. The first column represents language positions for which a prescribed level of skill is essential. The level of skill is matched against known staff capabilities (column 2) leading to the computation of language proficiencies (column 3) that must be met by 1971 when the Agency's new Foreign Language Program is to be fully implemented. A factor of three was used to compute the originally submitted requirements since it is the Language Development Committee's view that to keep one position filled with a language-qualified officer there must be three candidates. Oral proficiencies are the bases for the CS determinations; reading skills, for the Intelligence Directorate.

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Goals for language study became more real in 1968, being tailored to students on almost an individual basis. Most of the training was full-time in contrast to part-time in previous years. Training averaged 14 weeks for each student. Ninety percent of internal training and almost 100% of that taken externally was accounted for by CS personnel. A total of [redacted] CS trainees with a maintenance-refresher, limited goal finished training without moving into a higher tested level of proficiency. An additional [redacted] achieved better than Elementary skill in world languages or better than Slight in the "hard" languages. Twenty percent of CS training was in French followed by Spanish which

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was about 19%. In CY 68 there were [redacted] Chinese and Japanese students who completed their studies as opposed to only [redacted] in CY 67. Arabic and Vietnamese training declined, showing fewer hours and less individual achievement than in the previous year. Training in East European languages was minimal. In Russian study the CS furnished only one-third of the total input while two-thirds was part-time students from the DDI. Just over 420 employees, representing the CS, DDI and DDS, completed either part-time or full-time training in 1968. 25X9 25X9

[redacted] 25X1

Chairman, Language Development Committee

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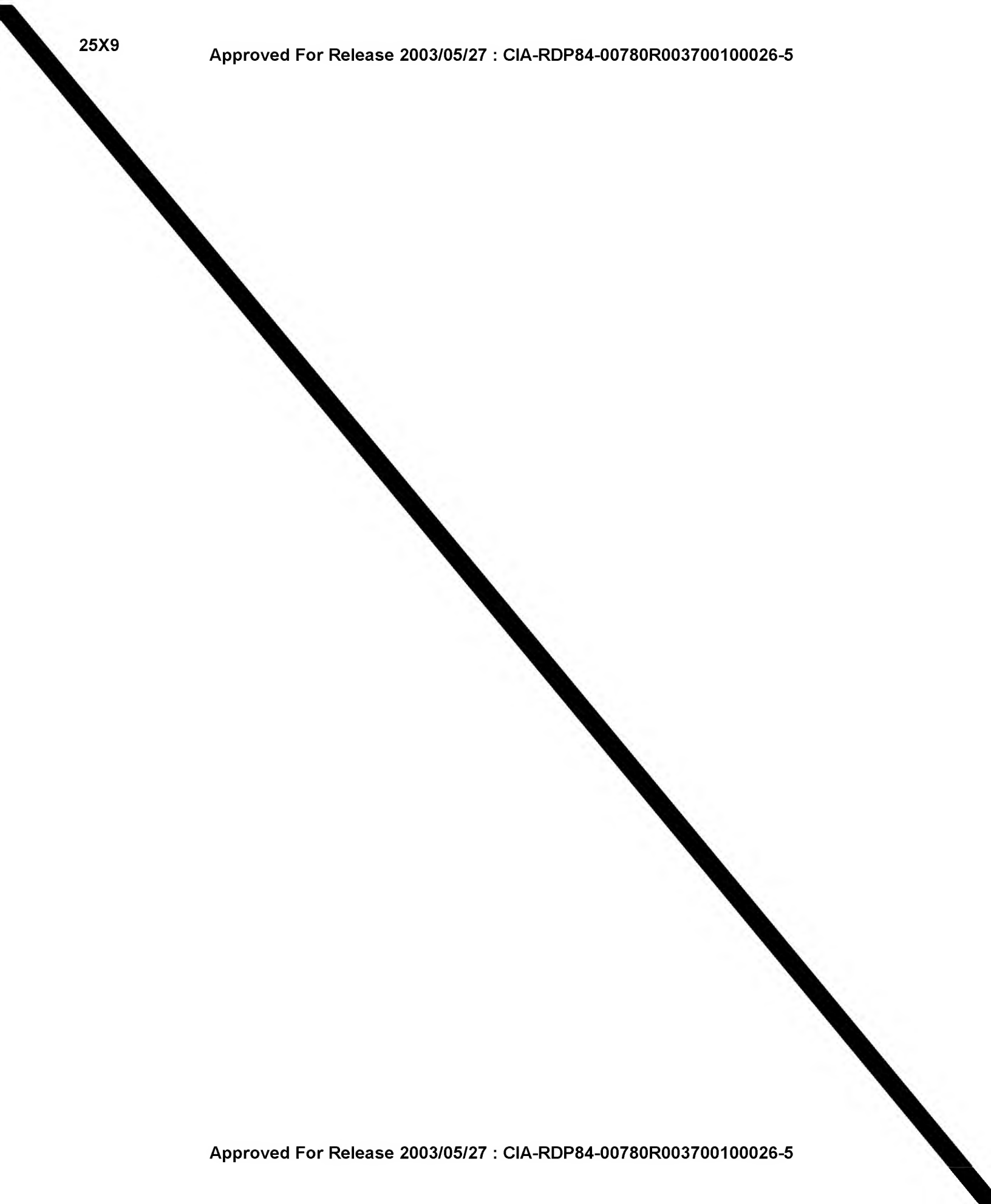

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